(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Explosive in the material left by army at repair shop at Pokhran

†1100. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the repair work of defence vehicles and other material in Pokhran field firing range is carried out in the local market at Pokhran;

(b) whether some material for repair work was forcibly left by the armymen with Mr. Zahoor Mohammed, the blacksmith, at Pokhran on 28th January, 2006 inspite of Mr. Zahoor Mohammed's refusal;

(c) whether the officers of field firing range received any information regarding presence of some explosive in that material and death of Shri Zahoor Mohammed; and

(d) if so, the action taken thereon and if not, the persons responsible in this matter?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) No, Sir. Army vehicles are routinely repaired in Army Workshops. Army convoys moving on National Highway passing through Pokhran carry repair and recovery detachments. However, single administrative vehicles breaking down on National Highways may be getting minor repairs done from the civil market.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Does not arise in view of reply to (b) above.

Operational field firing ranges

1101. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether out of more than 90 Field Firing Ranges only 40 are now operational affecting the army's training programmes;

(b) whether the Ministry of Environment and Forests has barred opening up of any additional Field Firing Range due to perceived threat to flora and fauna of the region where such FFRs are to be located; and

(c) whether the army is now scouting for barren and rocky patches of land to locate additional FFRs which may not cause much environment damage?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) At present, 40 Field Firing Ranges (FFRs) are available to the Army for training and field firing. Availability of adequate number of FFRs is essential for the maintenance of the training standards in the Army.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) No, Sir. However, any proposal for the establishment of FFRs covering forest land requires the clearance of the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

(c) Additional FFRs, whenever required, would possibly be located in barren and rocky areas.

Permanent commission to non-technical officers of SSC cadre

1102. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether officers in SSC Cadre of Non-Tech Ground Duty Branches of the IAF had been given permanent commission since 1992; and

(b) if so, the total number of officers commissioned, year-wise and gender-wise?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) Officers in SSC Cadre of Non-Technical Ground Duty Branches of the IAF, who met the eligibility criteria, have been given permanent commission since 1992. However, the grant of Permanent Commission to officers in SSC Cadre of Non Technical Ground Duty Branches of the IAF has been discontinued since 25th May, 2006.

The year-wise/Gender-wise details of such officers of Non-Technical Branches is given below:-

Year	Women Officers	Male Officers
1992	–	45
1993	30	16
1994	28	11
1995	22	08
1996	51	08
1997	48	18
1998	43	26
1999	20	23
2000	31	21
2001	32	10
2002	30	41
2003	61	–
2004	51	–
2005	66	–
2006	50	08
TOTAL:	563	235